

MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

September 22, 1994
Cedar Lodge, Conference Room
9966 Highway 140
El Portal, California

Executive Council Members Present

Michael Mantell, Undersecretary for Resources
Jerry Harmon, San Diego Association of Governments
Boyd Gibbons, Director, Department of Fish and Game
Don Erman, University of California
Arthur Baggett, Regional Council of Rural County Supervisors
Penny Howard, Bureau of Reclamation
Laurence Laurent, South Central Coastal Regional Association of County Supervisors
John Burton, Department of Conservation
Mike Finley, National Park Service
Ed Hastey, Bureau of Land Management
Lynn Sprague, U. S. Forest Service
Nancy Huffman, Northern California County Supervisors Association
Richard Wilson, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Nita Vail, Department of Food and Agriculture
Hershel Read, Soil Conservation Service
Carroll Hamon, Department of Water Resources
Nick Kinney, San Joaquin Valley Regional Association of County Supervisors
Ken Jones, Department of Parks and Recreation
Howard Stark, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Staff

Susan Cochrane, Department of Fish and Game
Bob Ewing, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE JUNE 16, 1994, MEETING

The minutes were approved with the following correction: Laurence Laurent's correct affiliation is South Central Coastal Regional Association of County Supervisors.

REPORT OF SIERRA WORKSHOP

Art Baggett provided an overview on the Sierra Workshop held in El Portal, September 21, 1994. Specific needs identified by workshop participants were as follows:

1. More authority and funding is needed at the local level.
2. Fire issues and fuel treatments need to be addressed as a priority.
3. End-users of natural resources should be charged, and revenues should be returned to the local communities to protect the watershed.

Areas of action for the Executive Council were suggested as follows:

1. Pick one specific project and follow it through to completion.
2. Acquire funding for the Help Desk. This is seen as a vital function.
3. Expand Council membership. Recommendations include the Air Resources Board and the Environmental Protection Agency.
4. Assist in providing computer access to information for the local groups.
5. Provide for authority and direction at the local level.
6. Educate the communities regarding the Executive Council.

The biomass issue as it relates to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) was discussed as a potential Council project. However, it was the consensus of the Council not to choose this as a project for Council action. Instead, each individual agency should pursue analysis and a course of action with the PUC that it deems appropriate. The Interagency Fire Task Force and the California Economic Revitalization Team (CERT) processes are also extensively reviewing this issue and will be providing analysis and input as well.

SIERRA SUMMIT UPDATE

Jeanne Adams, a member of the Sierra Summit Steering Committee provided the Council with an update of the Sierra Summit activities as follows:

1. The Sierra Nevada Catalog, a PC-based catalog of geographic information, was designed and made available to users in the Sierra Nevada. The database has been distributed to each of the 17 counties in the Sierra region and training has been provided to many of the local suppliers of information.

2. The Sierra Nevada User Needs Assessment identified concerns and needs of potential local users. This report is available from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Strategic Planning Program.
3. The Sierra Nevada Information and Inventory Project (SNIIP) developed a statewide Bulletin Board System (CALSOURCE). It can be reached at 1-800-200-7732 with a personal computer and a modem.
4. The Sierra Nevada Research Planning Project was completed. A report will soon be available from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Strategic Planning Program.
5. Local watershed biodiversity coordination was implemented in three local watersheds within the Sierra Nevada.

The issue of sustainable economies was recognized as difficult to address. Although some accomplishments were reported, this continues to be an area that will require continued Agency and community involvement. The Summit spawned organizations such as the Sierra Nevada Alliance and the Sierra Nevada Business Council to address environmentally sensitive and sustainable economies. The future of the Sierra Summit, its relationship with the Executive Council, and the possible need for a steering committee was discussed.

Bob Ewing, Michael Mantell, and Dennis Machida will review the matter of continuing the Sierra Summit Steering Committee and present some options and recommendations at the next Council meeting.

SIERRA NEVADA ECOSYSTEM PROJECT (SNEP) OVERVIEW

Don Erman provided an update on the project. Activities were summarized as follows:

1. The Geographic Information System (GIS) component of SNEP moved from U.C. Davis to the CDF Strategic Planning Program offices in Sacramento which is co-located with U.S. Forest Service Remote Sensing Lab.
2. An assessment was undertaken of current conditions and locations of late successional forest. This assessment will be completed by early next summer.
3. Information on the location of extraction activities will be included in the GIS database.
4. Spatial models on forest management are being developed, including how different land management alternatives affect the full range of implications from the human dimensions to the ecological effects.

5. Meetings will be held with the major timber owners, cattleman's association, and landowners to ask for assistance and cooperation in developing a comprehensive assessment of private and public lands.
6. The Sierra Nevada Project will deliver its final report in December of 1995.
7. The Project's preliminary decision is to leave the SNEP GIS and database with the CERES project after December 1995.

Bob Ewing commented that CERES is a decentralized system. CERES plans to provide local access to information at local bioregional information centers. The SNEP server and information could be located at South Lake Tahoe at the community college or other Sierra sites. Individual databases that make up the SNEP system will have their own custodians, who would continue to maintain responsibility for data quality and updates from their own sites.

DISCUSSION ON COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Report on the Granlibakken Meeting

Art Baggett discussed the results of the May meeting held at Granlibakken. Three regional workshops will be held to obtain local feedback on what resources are needed and to receive ideas on the mission statement. Other Council activities that will serve to improve communication and exchange of information include: expansion of the Biodiversity News, the proposed Biodiversity Resource Planning Guide, California Watershed Project Inventory, and Watershed Group Directory.

Membership Committee Update

Ed Hastey reviewed requests for membership that have been received. The Membership Committee recommended to the Council that membership be opened up to include any local, state, or federal entity that supports the goals of the Memorandum of Understanding. Sponsorship from non-governmental organizations was also recommended. It was suggested that regional meetings with Council members and regional representatives be held on a quarterly basis, in addition to full Council meetings held in Sacramento twice a year.

All recommendations were endorsed by the Council with an amendment that the specific format, including format for funding, be worked out through Council subcommittees. The Liaison Team with the Membership Committee will report at the next meeting on a work plan and funding mechanism to support ongoing Council activities.

CERES

The Council agreed to have a Biodiversity Council "Home page" accessible through CERES. Information on Council activities and resources for biodiversity planning will be made accessible through the Internet. The world wide web address for CERES is:
<http://agency.resource.ca.gov/>

Report of Council Liaison Committee

Bob Ewing reviewed the activities of the Liaison Committee. Additional funding and staff are needed for all proposed activities. Activities being considered are:

1. Three local staff workshops. The Committee will report back to the Council with a firm proposal.
2. Regional Managers Committees will not be established. The Liaison Team will work with local managers more informally.
3. The Liaison Team will continue to review the need for membership assessments to cover operational budgets.

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY SUPERVISORS' BIODIVERSITY TASK FORCE REPORT

Nick Kinney summarized a two-page draft of a Partnership Agreement by the San Joaquin Valley Supervisors' Resource Conservation Task Force. Request was made to receive comments from Council members by October 1, 1994, and for \$10,000 in grant money to fund the partnership's administrative expenses for the first year.

PROPOSAL ON NATIONAL HIERARCHY OF ECOLOGICAL UNITS

Jon Kennedy introduced ECOMAP as an interagency project with the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service and Bureau of Land Management to achieve a unified stratification classification and mapping system which deals with biological resources. Assisting in this presentation were Dave Smith, SCS; Chuck Goudey, U.S. Forest Service retired; and David Diaz, U.S. Forest Service.

RIPARIAN HABITAT JOINT VENTURE

Dan Evans, Director of Pt. Reyes Bird Observatory, presented information on a statewide partnership effort with a focus on riparian habitat to identify priorities and develop a specific implementation plan. Council members were requested to review and comment on the Working Agreement and on the Council's role in this partnership.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Friends of Russian River

Tom Roth discussed the work that was done by this group which included efforts with Congressman Riggs on the Russian River Bill and Vernal Pools Task Force. The river is currently threatened by gravel removal and dams, resulting in a loss of riparian zone, loss of soil, and a lowering of the water table. Additional research is needed, as well as determination of gravel sustainability, and the need to restore the fish habitat.

Resource Conservation District

Glenda Humiston agreed with the problems of the Russian River watershed effort. She informed the Council of the considerable interest shown by public groups that have been meeting under a Coastal Conservancy funded project for the last three years. Among their activities was the creation of a GIS system and user group for their two-county area.

Shasta Tehama Bioregional Council

Mary Shroeder stressed the importance of the ability of various groups to communicate with one another and to provide a mechanism for exchange of experiences. She strongly supports a 1-800 number for use by bioregional watershed groups. *The World Waiting to Be Born* was recommended for reading. Recommendation was made to the Council for consideration of two bioregional seats on the Executive Council, one for the north and one for the south.

South Fork Trinity River

As a resident on the South Fork of the Trinity River, Mary Lee Stephenson provided commentary on the importance of shade, the need for oxygen and water, and the role of climate and fire control. She commended the local agencies for their recent efforts to improve that area.

SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING

It was suggested the next meeting be held in San Diego on December 8 and 9, 1994.

FIELD TRIP

Chris Nota announced the field trip would be held in the meeting room and not at the Mariposa Fairgrounds as originally announced.

REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF COUNCIL NAME

Laurence Laurent suggested the Council consider changing its name to California Biodiversity Council.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.